

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
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AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMCONSUL DURBAN

UNCLAS PRETORIA 4302

E.O. 11652: N/A
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SUBJECT: RHODESIA: INTERIM GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES ELECTION SCHEDULE

1. ON JULY 26, CO-MINISTERS OF MANPOWER, POWAN CRONJE AND GIBSON
MAGARAMOMBE, ANNOUNCED A TIMETABLE FOR ELECTIONS THAT WOULD END ON
MIDNIGHT, DECEMBER 31, WITH A HANDOVER TO THE FIRST BLACK
RHODESIAN GOVERNMENT. THE TIMETABLE IS: OCTOBER 20 DEADLINE FOR AN
ENACTMENT OF THE NEW CONSTITUTION AFTER A WHITE REFERENDUM AND THE
REDUCTION OF THE PRESENT 50 WHITE SEATS INTO THE DELIMITED 20 SEATS;
OCTOBER 24 DEADLINE FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF 16 WHITE CANDIDATES FOR TH
E
EIGHT WHITE MPS TO BE CHOSEN ON A COMMON ROLE AND FOR THE
REGISTRATION OF BLACK PARTIES FOR THE ELECTION; OCTOBER 31 DEADLINE
FOR NOMINATION OF 20 WHITE CANDIDATES TO BE CHOSEN BY WHITE VOTERS;
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DECEMBER 3 DEADLINE FOR DISTRIBUTION OF BALLOT PAPERS; DECEMBER 4
TO 6 THE ELECTION ITSELF; DECEMBER 13 ANNOUNCEMENT OF ELECTION
RESULTS; DECEMBER 18 DEADLINE FOR THREE ELECTORAL COLLEGES TO
CHOOSE SENATORS-- TEN BY WHITE MP'S, TEN BY BLACK MP'S AND TEN BY
COUNCIL OF CHIEFS; DECEMBER 24 DEADLINE FOR PARLIAMENT TO ELECT THE
HEAD OF STATE; AND, DECEMBER 31, HANDOVER TO MAJORITY-RULED
GOVERNMENT.

2. IN ANNOUNCING THE TIMETABLE, CRONJE STATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE SCRUPULOUS ABOUT ENSURING THAT THE ELECTIONS BE FAIR AND IMPARTIAL. HE SAID, THEREFORE, THEY WERE CONSIDERING APPOINTING AN ELECTORAL SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE AND WELCOMED ANY OUTSIDE BODY SUCH AS

THE UN OR OAU TO SEND OBSERVERS. WHEN ASKED BY REPORTERS IF THE ESCALATING WAR MIGHT MAKE ELECTIONS IMPOSSIBLE, CRONJE ACKNOWLEDGED THE POSSIBILITY BUT SAID HIS COMMITTEE WAS GIVEN THE JOB OF PLANNING THE ELECTIONS AND WAS NOT CONCERNED WITH POLITICAL OR SECURITY ASPECTS. " ONLY TIME WILL TELL", HE SAID, IF THE ELECTIONS CAN BE HELD. IF NOT, " GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE TO FACE UP TO THAT."

3. AN EARLIER PRESS ACCOUNT IN THE JOHANNESBURG STAR DESCRIBED THE PROPOSED ELECTORAL PROCESS IN SOME DETAIL. QUOTING MR. ERIC POPE-SIMMONDS, THE RHODESIAN REGISTRAR GENERAL, THE ARTICLE CONFIRMED THAT THE ELECTION FOR THE 72 GENERAL SEATS OUT OF THE 100 SEATS IN PARLIAMENT, WILL BE ON A PARTY LIST BASE, WITH THE VOTERS CASTING BALLOTS FOR THE PARTY ONLY. THE PARTIES WILL BE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT A LIST OF 72 CANDIDATES TO THE REGISTRAR GENERAL IN ADVANCE FROM WHICH ITS SUCCESSFUL PROPORTION OF MP'S WILL BE CHOSEN.
EDMONDSON

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